

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0286
INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 08153

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, GT, UK, BH, MX
SUBJECT: PRICE VISIT TO MEXICO CITY

REF: (A) BELIZE, 471, (B) MEXICO 1209, (C) 77 MEXICO 14001

1. IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL (A), EMBASSY OFFERS FOLLOWING
COMMENTS ON LATEST PRICE VISIT WHICH ARE BASED ON INFORMAL
CONVERSATIONS WITH GOM FONSEC OFFICIALS AND BRITISH EM-
BASSY IN MEXICO CITY.

2. ACCORDING TO BRITISH EMBASSY (WHOSE INFORMATION APPAR-
ENTLY IS BASED ON SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION BETWEEN PRICE AND
UK GOVERNOR IN BELIZE), PRICE VISIT ON APRIL 27 RESULTED IN
NO CHANGE IN MEXICAN POSITION RE BELIZE. PRICE DID MEET
WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO AND FONSEC ROEL AND, AS IN
PAST, IT IS BRITISH EMBASSY UNDERSTANDING THAT MEXICO RE-
ITERATED ITS SUPPORT OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR BELIZE.

3. BRITISH EMBASSY HERE UNDERSTANDS THAT PRICE BRIEFED
JLP AND ROEL ON BELIZE'S ALLEGED PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING
CONCEPT OF MULTILATERAL FORCE. AS IN PAST, HOWEVER,
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MEXICO DID NOT OFFER ITS SUPPORT FOR SUCH A CONCEPT.
INDEED, IT IS BRITISH UNDERSTANDING THAT JLP TOLD PRICE
THAT MEXICAN POLICY WOULD NOT PERMIT MEXICAN PARTICIPA-
TION IN SUCH A FORCE. AS A RESULT, SHOMAN STATEMENT THAT
GOB IS HOPEFUL OF MEXICAN SUPPORT FOR MULTILATERAL FORCE
APPEARS INACCURATE. PERHAPS IT IS EXAMPLE OF PRICE'S
TENDENCY TO CLAIM MORE GOM SUPPORT THAN HE ACTUALLY HAS

AS LEVERAGE TO TRY AND OBTAIN FAVORABLE RESPONSE FROM OTHER GOVERNMENTS.

4. ON ISSUE OF ALLEGED MEXICAN COMMITMENT "NOT TO PRESS CLAIM FOR LAND SETTLEMENT IN NORTH IN EVENT THERE IS SOME SORT OF BORDER RECTIFICATION IN SOUTH", THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH WHAT GOM OFFICIALS HAVE FOR SOME TIME BEEN TELLING EMBASSY AND HIGH-RANKING U.S. OFFICIALS (SEE REFTELS (B) AND (C), BOTH OF WHICH WERE INFO TO BELIZE), THAT IS, THAT IF BELIZEAN PEOPLE IN EXERCISE OF THEIR SELF-DETERMINATION WOULD AGREE TO SOME SORT OF LAND ADJUSTMENT IN SOUTH, MEXICO WOULD PROBABLY NOT PRESS ITS CLAIM IN THE NORTH. NEVERTHELESS, BASED ON GOVERNOR'S REPORT, BRITISH EMBASSY HERE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT MEXICO HAS CLEARLY STATED THIS POSITION TO PRICE. INDEED, DURING LATEST PRICE VISIT BRITISH EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT MEXICO TOLD PRICE THAT IT HAD GIVEN "NO ASSURANCE" TO UK THAT IT WOULD NOT PRESS CLAIM IN THE EVENT OF TERRITORIAL ADJUSTMENT AS PART OF SETTLEMENT. COMMENT: GOM AND GOB BOTH SEEM TO BE TAILORING THEIR MESSAGE TO WHAT THEY THINK THEIR AUDITORS WILL FIND MOST CONGENIAL. END COMMENT.

5. FINALLY, ON ISSUE OF OIL IN NORTHERN BELIZE, BRITISH HERE CONFIRMED THAT CONVERSATIONS WITH PEMEX DO NOT PROVIDE ANY CONFIRMATION RE MEXICAN PRESS REPORTS ABOUT OIL IN NORTHERN BELIZE. AS FAR AS THEY CAN DETERMINE, THESE

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PRESS REFERENCES TO OIL IN BELIZE STEM FROM FEBRUARY 1978 ARTICLE WRITTEN BY PEMEX OFFICIAL WHICH SUGGESTED, BASED ON OLD, 1972 GEOLOGICAL MAP OF SOUTHERN MEXICO/BELIZE, THAT OIL-BEARING STRUCTURES IN MEXICO MIGHT EXTEND INTO BELIZE. THOMPSON

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